IN THE CLAIMS

I CLAIM:

1. (Currently amended) A retractable camera apparatus comprising:

a housing portion;

at least one arm portion coupled to the housing portion wherein the at least one arm portion is capable of being moved between a retracted position and a deployed position; and

a plurality of cameras [at least one camera] coupled to the at least one arm portion.

2. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the deployed position comprises a position in which the at least one arm portion is movably extended from the housing portion such that the ~~at least one camera is~~ the plurality of cameras are capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which the at least one arm portion is moveably retracted into the housing portion.

4. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one arm portion includes a central arm portion coupled to the housing portion and the ~~at least one camera~~ plurality of cameras comprise[s] three cameras wherein one of the three cameras is coupled to the central arm portion.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which two of the three cameras are moveably retracted into the housing portion.

6. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the at least one arm portion includes a central arm portion coupled to the housing portion and the ~~at least one camera~~ plurality of cameras comprise[s] five cameras wherein one of the five cameras is coupled to the central arm portion.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the at least one arm portion further includes two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to one of the two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to the other of the two exterior arm portions and the deployed position comprises a position in which two of the five cameras are positioned on one side of the housing portion and two of the five cameras are positioned opposite the one side of the housing portion such that each of the five cameras is capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which four of the five cameras are moveably retracted into the housing portion.

9. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ~~at least one camera~~ the plurality of cameras record[s] a real-time video stream of an image in front of the apparatus and the apparatus is coupled to a computer system wherein the computer system includes:

a view synthesis module for generating a plurality of output video image streams by applying a view synthesis technique to each real-time video streams; and

a contour extraction module for extracting the image from a physical background.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the housing portion is capable of being coupled to a desktop video display.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the desktop video display comprises a flat-panel display.

12. (Currently amended) A system for capturing images comprising:

a desktop video display; and

a retractable camera apparatus coupled to the desktop video display wherein the retractable camera comprises[:];

a housing portion;

at least one arm portion coupled to the housing portion wherein the at least one arm portion is capable of being moved between a retracted position and a deployed position; and

a plurality of cameras [at least one camera] coupled to the at least one arm portion.

13. (Currently amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the deployed position comprises a position in which the at least one arm portion is movably extended from the housing portion such that the [at least one camera is] plurality of cameras are capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus.

14. (Original) The system of claim 13 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which the at least one arm portion is moveably retracted into the housing portion.

15. (Currently amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the at least one arm portion includes a central arm portion coupled to the housing portion and the [at least one camera] plurality of cameras comprise[s] three cameras wherein one of the three cameras is coupled to the central arm portion.

16. (Original) The system of claim 15 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which two of the three cameras are moveably retracted into the housing portion.

17. (Currently amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the at least one arm portion includes a central arm portion coupled to the housing portion and the [at least one camera] plurality of cameras comprise[s] five cameras wherein one of the five cameras is coupled to the central arm portion.

18. (Original) The system of claim 17 wherein the at least one arm portion further includes two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to one of the two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to the other of the two exterior arm portions and the deployed position comprises a position in which two of the five cameras are positioned on one side of the housing portion and two of the five cameras are positioned opposite the one side of the

housing portion such that each of the five cameras is capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus.

19. (Original) The system of claim 16 wherein the retracted position comprises a position in which four of the five cameras are moveably retracted into the housing portion.

20. (Currently amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the [at least one camera] plurality of cameras record[s] a real-time video stream of an image in front of the apparatus and the apparatus is coupled to a computer system wherein the computer system includes:

a view synthesis module for generating a plurality of output video image streams by applying a view synthesis technique to each real-time video streams; and

a contour extraction module for extracting the image from a physical background.

21. (Original) The system of claim 12 wherein the desktop video display comprises a flat-panel display.

22. (Original) A retractable camera apparatus comprising:

a housing portion;

three arm portions coupled to the housing portion wherein the three arm portions comprise a central arm portion and two exterior arm portions that are capable of being moved between a retracted position and a deployed position; and

five cameras wherein one of the five cameras is coupled to the central arm portion, two of the five cameras are coupled to one of the two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to the other of the two exterior arm portions and the deployed position comprises a position in which two of the five cameras are positioned on one side of the housing portion and two of the five cameras are positioned opposite the one side of the housing portion such that each of the five cameras is capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus and the retracted position comprises a position in which four of the five cameras are movably retracted into the housing portion.

23. (~~Currently amended~~ Original) The apparatus of claim 22 wherein each of the five cameras records a real-time video stream of an image in front of the apparatus and the apparatus is coupled to a computer system wherein the computer system includes:

a view synthesis module for generating a plurality of output video image streams by applying a view synthesis technique to each real-time video streams; and

a contour extraction module for extracting the image from a physical background.

24. (Original) A system for capturing images comprising:

a desktop video display; and

a retractable camera apparatus coupled to the desktop display wherein the retractable camera apparatus comprises:

a housing portion;

three arm portions coupled to the housing portion wherein the three arm portions comprise a central arm portion and two exterior arm portions that are capable of being moved between a retracted position and a deployed position; and

five cameras wherein one of the five cameras is coupled to the central arm portion, two of the five cameras are coupled to one of the two exterior arm portions and two of the five cameras are coupled to the other of the two exterior arm portions and the deployed position comprises a position in which two of the five cameras are positioned on one side of the housing portion and two of the five cameras are positioned opposite the one side of the housing portion such that each of the five cameras is capable of capturing an image in front of the apparatus and the retracted position comprises a position in which four of the five cameras are movably retracted into the housing portion.

25. (Original) The system of claim 24 wherein the desktop video display comprises a flat-panel display.

26. (Currently amended) A method of utilizing a retractable camera apparatus, the apparatus comprising a housing portion, at least one arm portion coupled to the housing portion wherein the at least one arm portion is capable of being moved between a retracted position and a deployed position; and a plurality of cameras [at least one camera] coupled to the at least one arm portion, the method comprising:

receiving a real-time video stream of an image in front of the apparatus from the ~~at least one camera~~ plurality of cameras;

utilizing a view synthesis module to generate a plurality of output video image streams by applying a view synthesis technique to the real-time video stream; and

utilizing a contour extraction module to extract the image from a physical background.

27. (Currently amended) The method of claim 26 wherein the at least one arm portion includes a central arm portion coupled to the housing portion and the [at least one camera] plurality of cameras comprise[s] five cameras wherein one of the five cameras is coupled to the central arm portion and receiving a real-time video stream further comprises receiving a real-time video stream of an image in front of the apparatus from each of the five cameras and applying a view synthesis technique to the real-time video stream comprises applying a view synthesis technique to each of the real-time video streams.